

Facebook founder aims to get India online

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US chairman and chief executive of Facebook Mark Zuckerberg announces the Internet.org Innovation Challenge in India in New Delhi on October 9, 2014

Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg said Thursday his social media network wanted to help India's new prime minister connect remote villages in the country of over 1.2 billion to the Internet.

Zuckerberg, who will meet Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday, said India had huge potential, with only around 243 million of its people currently online.

"With more than one billion people still to be connected, India is just at the beginning. It is not only a challenge for Facebook but for everybody," he told a conference in New Delhi.

"Tomorrow I'm meeting the [prime minister](#). He is committed to connecting villages online and we are excited to see how Facebook can help."

Zuckerberg is on a two-day visit to India aimed at promoting the internet.org app, which allows people in underdeveloped areas to access basic online services.

"We believe that connectivity is a human right and one of the fundamental challenges for our generation," said Zuckerberg.

He denied accusations he is seeking to create a monopoly in access to online content in the developing world, saying mobile operators were free to decide which services they included, and did not have to include Facebook.

He said the app, which Facebook launched in Zambia earlier this year in cooperation with Samsung and other partners, will not be available immediately in India.

"India is such an important country with so many people that we didn't want to start here with the risk of not doing well," said Zuckerberg.

One of [social media](#)'s main challenges in India is that many different languages are used across the country, and Zuckerberg said Facebook was now "focusing on content in local languages".

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